

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-02 H-02 SS-15

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R 221500Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1882

INFO: RUFNPS/ AMEMBASSY PARIS 0322

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

UNCLAS MARTINIQUE 0172

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR,FR,MR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: SUSPENSION PANAM SERVICE TO CARIBBEAN

REF: STATE 091355

1. WE HOPE THE CAB DECISION TO DENY AMERICAN AIRLINES REQUEST FOR DIRECT NEW YORK-MARTINIQUE/GUADELOUPE SERVICE IS NOT FINAL, FOR IT IS, I BELIEVE, A DECISION WHICH DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ADEQUATELY OUR BROADER INTERESTS IN THE CARIBBEAN.

2. WE NEITHER WANT, NOR ARE WE IN A POSITION, TO DISPUTE THE CAB DECISION ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS. IT WELL MAY BE THAT PANAM S LOSSES IN ITS ANTILLES FLIGHTS AND SOME OF THE ALTERNATE FLIGHTS TO THE ANTILLES FULLY JUSTIFY, ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS, CAB DENIAL OF AMERICAN S REQUEST. BUT THIS, IN OUR VIEW, IS NOT THE POINT ON WHICH WE SHOULD FOCUS.

3. IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE US THAT THE ANTILLES CONTINUE TO BE POLITICALLY STABLE AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE. BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HOW THESE ISLANDS CAN CONTINUE TO REMAIN STABLE IF THEY DO NOT HAVE SOME BROADER AND SOUNDER ECONOMIC BASE ON WHICH TO BUILD IN THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, THEIR RESOURCES ARE SO LIMITED THAT THERE ARE NO REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE

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TOURIST INDUSTRY AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT. AS FAR AS THE

FRENCH ANTILLES ARE CONCERNED, TOURISM WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE THE ONLY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY HERE WHICH CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE SHORT RUN TO MEET THE DEMANDS FOR HIGHER LIVING STANDARDS AND FASTER ECONOMIC GROWTH.

4. THE USG SHOULD NOT, IN MY OPINION, WORRY WHETHER THIS OR THAT AIRLINE CAN OPERATE PROFITABLY TO THE ANTILLES. OUR INTEREST IN AIR SERVICES TO THE WEST INDIES IS THAT THEY PROMOTE AND FOSTER TOURISM REGARDLESS OF THE PROBLEMS A CARRIER FACES IN MAKING ITS SERVICES PAY.

IF AMERICAN AIRLINES HAS DECIDED TO TAKE THE RISK OF TAKING OVER THE PANAM SERVICES, THAT IS AMERICAN AIRLINES PROBLEM. THE UNITED STATES PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE MATTER IS BEST MET BY ALLOWING ANY US CARRIER WILLING TO THE AREA TO DO SO. IN THIS WAY ADEQUATE US CARRIER SERVICES CAN BE ASSURED TO AN AREA VITALLY DEPENDENT UPON TOURISM FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND UPON WHICH IN TURN ITS POLITICAL STABILITY MAY ULTIMATELY REST. THE CAB S DECISION MAY BE CORRECT ON NARROW ECONOMIC GROUNDS, BUT DOES NOT IN MY OPINION, ADDRESS THE USG S BROADER INTERESTS IN THE MATTER.

SHACKLETON

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